1	2	3
11.	Punjab	Amritsar
12.	Orissa	Bhubaneshwar
13.	Uttar Pradesh	Greater NOIDA
14.	North Eastern Region	Guwahati

Illiterates in the country

3579. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that one-third of the world's illiterates are in this country, according to a UNESCO report released in November, 2007, and the downward trend is persisting as the country has slipped five ranks since the last year to 105 on the global education parameters;

(b) if so, whether Government would achieve the millennium development goals for the children; and

(c) if not, the steps being adopted therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, India has 35% of the world's total illiterates. Even though India has been ranked 105th in the Global Monitoring Report (GMR), 2008, as compared to 99th rank in the GMR, 2007, the Education Development Index (EDI) has risen from 0.789 to 0.797.

The main achievements of India, as per the GMR 2008, are high level of net enrolment in Primary education and significantly improved adult literacy and gender parity.

The following concrete steps have been taken for achieving the Millennium Development Goal pertaining to universal primary education:

(i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aimed at achieving the objectives of universalization of elementary education amongst children in the age group of 6-14 years in a time bound manner. As a result of this programme a large number of children have been brought into the fold of elementary education and number of out of school children has come down from 320 lakh in 2001-02 to 76 lakh in 2007-08.

(ii) Introduction to cooked Mid-day Meal (MDM) Scheme for all children in class I-V in Government and Government aided schools, centres under the Alternating and Innovative Education (AIE) and Education Guarantee Scheme and its extension to upper Primary level in 3479 educationally backward blocks (EBBs).

(iii) Levy of 2% Education Cess in order to bridge the gap between available plan resources and established requirements to finance Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-day Meal, the two main programmes for universalization of elementary education.

(c) Does not arise.